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ON PRAYER; AND FORMS OF PRAYER, THEIR
DEFECTS, AND REMEDY;

A S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL
IN ESSEX STREET, STRAND;

ON SUNDAY, APRIL XIV, MDCCXCHH.

BY THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M.A.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCXCHH.

ON THE 11TH AND 12TH OF MAY
1865

W. D. R. M. O. N.

AT THE COURT

IN THE COUNTY OF YORK

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BY THE COURT

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W. D. R. M. O. N.

ON THE 11TH AND 12TH OF MAY

1865

S E R M O N.

PHILIP. iv. 6.

BE ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING ; BUT IN EVERY
THING, BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION,
WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS
BE MADE KNOWN UNTO GOD.

THERE is none of St. Paul's epistles, which
we read with such pleasure and satisfaction, as
this which he sent, during his imprisonment at
Rome, to the christians of Philippi, a city of
Macedonia.

They were a people who had been brought
out of the darkness of idolatry to the knowledge
of the one only true God, and taught the way
to eternal life, by his labours among them :
for which they thought they could never enough
testify their gratitude to him ; and had now
sent a person, with presents to him, for his sup-
port under his confinement.

He had at first gone amongst them by an
especial divine (*Acts* xvi. 9. 10.) direction ; and

some tokens of an extraordinary miraculous interposition concurred to favour his preaching, and to convince many of the divine authority of Christ and his gospel. For by an appeal to this authority, the apostle had cured and restored a young woman, who *had a spirit of divination*, (ver. 16.) as was given out; but who in reality was disordered in her senses, and whom her crafty keepers carried about for gain, pretending that she was inspired, and could tell things above human power to know. The profit of these men being at an end, by her being healed and brought to her right mind, in revenge they procured the apostle and his companion to be unlawfully imprisoned. They were however both of them delivered by the extraordinary power of God, that same night, bursting open the prison-doors; and, this became the means of the affrighted jailor being brought to see, that these men were, what they had declared themselves to be, the special servants and messengers of the most high God; so that both he and his family, embraced the gospel. And we cannot doubt of these astonishing events affecting the minds of others, who would become acquainted with them, and, putting them upon serious inquiry into them; which could not fail to issue in a conviction of the truth

truth of the gospel, and in the open profession of it, by some of them at least.

A church, or congregation of believers, being thus happily planted, and watered and cherished, by the apostle's unwearied exertions whilst with them, and his counsels by writing and messages after he had left them, the pure doctrine of Christ, and the virtues of the christian life, seem to have flourished greatly among these Philippians; they continuing their respect and kindness for their first venerable teacher, and the apostle manifesting a peculiar affection for them, which appears throughout this epistle. For nothing gave him joy equal to that, of being instrumental in the bringing of men, from ignorance and vice, to the knowledge of God, and a holy and virtuous life.

At the close of his epistle, the chief subject of it being finished, he proceeds, in his usual way, to give them instructions for their moral and christian conduct, such as he judged necessary for them, and suited to their case: but which are applicable, and useful to christians in similar circumstances, at all times.

Just before the exhortation of the text, we may gather, that he considered them as in a

state of persecution, which was indeed then in general the condition of all sincere followers of Christ; by his recommending moderation, or meekness of temper, which was peculiarly suited to such a state, and by subjoining, *the Lord is at hand*; which declaration may be considered as a motive to patience and perseverance under the idea that there was one, who was above all, on whose support they might rely; and who would soon vindicate them, and their cause.

The words prefixed to my discourse, which immediately follow, may be thus differently expressed “ In the mean while, whatever difficulties and dangers you are brought into, be not over anxious, nor dejected at them: but in all seasons, look up to God, and seek help of him, and a supply of all your wants, with due acknowledgement of his mercies in calling you to the knowlege of his truth, and to bear your testimony to it. *And the peace of God, concludes he, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ, i. e. through the gospel: for Christ, or Christ Jesus, here, as often elsewhere, is put for his gospel: they would experience all needful support from God, in adhering to it, whatever they suffered from men.*

The subject will lead me to treat of prayer ; of some difficulties relating to it ; what are the things we are to ask of God ; how to expect our prayers to be answered ; and in the conclusion I shall take occasion to speak of forms of prayer for public worship, of their defects and their remedy, with a view to a new edition of our liturgy just now finished for use.

*The high
privilege
of Prayer.*

All the wise, and good, that have lived before us, who have searched into the works of nature, and endeavoured to find out their origin ; and every thing that we ourselves, by the help of others' discoveries, or our own, can see, learn, and conclude, from our own curious fabric, and from all the objects around us, concur to testify and prove, that this fair world and goodly frame of things, so wonderfully fitted and contrived for the well-being of its various inhabitants, did not come into being of itself ; but that there is a first cause of all things, itself without beginning ; an intelligent, governing mind ; a God of boundless power, wisdom and goodness, who made all things, and takes care of all the things he has made, and desires and intends their happiness.

To be admitted into the presence, as it were, of a Being so unspeakably great, and glorious in all perfections, beyond our highest conceptions; and allowed to pay our grateful homage and adorations to him, and at all times to pour out our hearts before him, under an assurance of his hearing and attending to our requests, and bestowing whatever we ask that may be good for us, is the peculiar privilege and dignity of our rational nature, our most pleasing exercise and employment, and support at all hours, and under all the vicissitudes of life, inspiring us with continual joy, and tending to our highest improvement.

Difficulties relating to it. But gloomy doubts will at times arise and force themselves upon us, concerning the offering up of prayer to this unseen author of our beings. "How know I (for instance) that the secret aspirations of my heart are perceived by him, or that he heareth my voice speaking to him? Or, granting that nothing can escape his knowledge, why trouble so great a majesty with my petitions, when I may depend on his bestowing whatever is for my good, without asking, and I cannot expect to prevail on him to change his purposes, and to give me what I should not have otherwise received?"

received? would it not be more becoming, not to dictate to Infinite Wisdom by too familiar addresses, but to wait, in humble silence, and in the discharge of our duty, his support and protection?

Here reason, a ray [of our Maker's intelligence within every one, holds forth its cheering lamp to us, and leads us to discern, and firmly to conclude, that He who gave us our being, necessarily sustains us in it; that without him we perish, and fall back into our primitive nothing. We cannot even for a moment consider him as separate and removed from the things that he has made. As he is therefore thus continually present to his creatures, he must be acquainted with every the minutest circumstance relating to them, and privy to all their thoughts, awful consideration! and of course hear their prayers.

The same heavenly monitor within, does also teach and dictate to us, and with a voice and plainness to be understood and felt by all, whose minds are in any degree cultivated; that as God every instant sustains us in life, continuing to us the use of our faculties and powers to make ourselves happy, and showers down his benefits upon us in such profusion, we ought

to

to pay him our daily acknowledgments. Kindness and favours received surely demand grateful acknowledgment, where our benefactor is known. No demonstration can be more conclusive.

And as it is natural, and every unperverted mind instantly acquiesces in it, as most just and right, thus to give thanks for, so does it become us also to intreat the *continuance* of our Almighty benefactor's favourable regards, on which our existence and happiness depend; especially are we almost involuntarily put upon it, at the close of each day, when in sleep we for a time lose our being, and become quite unable to take care of ourselves, to supplicate his watchful care, who *neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*.

There are also seasons of calamity and distress, when all human resources fail, and we are driven by an irresistible impulse, to fly to the parent power that brought us into life, to yield us comfort and support in it.

And we cannot but think, that our heavenly Father, in the great plan of his providence, hath made a suitable provision to answer this application of his children to him for assistance, which they find themselves thus constrained to, and

and to be bound upon them as their duty, agreeing also with the near and honourable relation they bear to him; so as to grant them, upon their desire, those things that may be good for them: and that he will regard, with a very different eye, those of his rational offspring, who careful to obey his will as far as they know it, with heartfelt gratitude express before him their sense of his goodness, and of their dependence upon him, and humbly seek his protection; and those who never turn their thoughts, and are wholly insensible of their obligations to him.

These truths and just sentiments however, which we, my brethren, see so clearly, and are so strongly impressed with, are such as unassisted reason rarely arrived at. And when we consider, how uncultivated the understandings of the far greater part are, and unpractised in these high speculations concerning either themselves or the gracious power who gave them being; and moreover that these arguments, however forcible, will not satisfy, and bear us up, at all hours, and in all the varieties of this chequered uncertain life, when the disturbed state of human affairs, the prosperity and prevalence of evil men, and depression of the good, will sometimes make us doubt our own strongest conclusions,

clusions, that a God of perfect wisdom and goodness governs the world; we shall regard it as an unspeakable advantage and felicity, to have that information and assurance, which has been given us by express revelation from above, from the eternal God and father of the universe; that although he hath *his dwelling so high, yet he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth*: that he is *about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways*; that he is a God *bearing prayer*, encouraging and inviting all his creatures of mankind to come unto him.

*What things
we are to
ask of God.*

This he hath taught us by holy men, extraordinarily favoured by him, whom he commissioned to reveal his will and designs; but chiefly and above all, by our Lord Jesus Christ, his last messenger to mankind. In the oracles of divine wisdom, the words of these servants of God, which have been faithfully recorded and handed down to us, we are instructed to look upon every thing as coming from God, and dispensed by him, and that therefore he is to be applied to for every thing; for regulating our inward dispositions, as well as for outward blessings.

In

In the solemn and sublime service at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, we observe, that together with petitions for *seasonable rains, for victory over enemies, for deliverance out of captivity*, the Israelites are instructed to supplicate the *Lord* their God to *be with them* as he was with their fathers, *not to leave them, nor forsake them*; that he would *incline their hearts unto him to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments.* 1 Kings viii.

The like is the language of their psalms and sacred songs.

Our Saviour Christ, in his admirable prayer for the use of his followers, recommends to them to ask for what may be necessary for the support of the present life, but chiefly to pray for pious dispositions, and a zeal to promote the gospel, and to fulfill the divine will.

In the epistles that remain of his apostles, we are highly edified with the manner in which they appear to have lived, under a continual sense of the presence of God, and in the offering up of frequent prayer to him, for themselves and for others; for temporal things, but chiefly for what tended to promote the success of the gospel, and the virtue and happiness of the world.

In

In short, the sacred oracles uniformly teach us, to regard our good dispositions, and virtuous actions, no less than temporal blessings, as the gift of God; and injoin and enforce prayer in such sort, as to lead us to consider it, as a means of divine appointment, to obtain these things; to purify our minds from sinful passions and desires, and to bring relief under poverty, sickness, pain, and the various ills of this our mortal state.

Authorized then and enjoined by the Almighty Being himself, thus to pray to, and to expect the things that we implore of him, so far as in his supreme wisdom he may think them fit for us; it is of great consequence that we form right sentiments concerning the way in which our Maker grants our requests; that we may not on the one hand, be misled by vain and groundless expectations of sensible communications from the Deity; or fall into despondency, and irreligion, on finding, that our prayers do not produce the effects we looked for from them.

*How to expect
our prayers to
be answered.*

To throw what light we can upon a subject unavoidably involved in some obscurity, we are to consider,
that

that as all things originate from, and are ordained by God, their almighty and wise author, to serve his benevolent purposes, and every change in the natural and moral world is brought about according to general laws, established by him, and under his direction, every thing may be justly said, on this account, to be *the work* of God, and to be *done* by him.

This, which reason teaches the pious inquirer into the works of nature, is also the language of divine revelation. It is God *who giveth meat to all creatures. He causeth the herb to grow for the use of man. He giveth medicine to heal their sickness. He feedeth the young ravens that call upon him. He also fashioneth the hearts of men. He maketh them clean hearts, and reneweth a right spirit within them.*

Not that these effects are produced in the world of nature, or upon the minds of men, by the immediate hand of God, but by the use and help of means, and instruments, provided by, and acting under him, if we may so speak, and settled by him.

As then, (to apply these remarks in the present case) in asking our daily bread, which our Saviour enjoins us to do, we are not to look
for

for it being sent down to us from heaven, as was the *manna* to the Israelites in the wilderness; but to obtain it by the blessing of God upon our own exertions and industry, and by the air and elements being disposed by him so as to produce favourable seasons, and a plentiful harvest :

So when we pray to God, to give us his grace, and assistance to do his will, to put good desires into our hearts, and indue us with right dispositions, we are not to reckon upon these changes to be wrought in our minds and tempers all at once, by the immediate act of God, but by degrees, through our own watchful care and diligence to cultivate and cherish good thoughts, to keep out of the way of dangerous temptations, to attend to the motives of the gospel, the love and fear of God, and the hope of his favour for ever; still looking up to, and depending upon him, ever present and attentive; to bless the means of his own appointment, for the making of us such as he would have us to be; that as he knows the various opposite influences we are under, he would give us wisdom and fortitude to resist the evil, and follow that which leads to good, and make all events contribute to our improvement and establishment in piety and virtue.

These

These means of virtue and holiness, and of approving ourselves to him, are furnished by our Maker, in the ordinary course of his providence, but are no less his gift, and to be considered as designed by him to make us virtuous and good, as much as if by an extraordinary voice from heaven he should call out to us, as our Lord did to Saul, in his journey to Damascus, and stop us in our sinful career.

In this way, in the use of their own endeavours to obtain the things they asked for, with their hands to their work, and their eyes lifted up to heaven, the wise and good in all ages, where the true God has been known, have experienced the benefit and success of their application and prayers to him, in an escape from temporal evils, or the mitigation of them, or support under them; and by deliverance from the greatest evil of all, their own sinful passions, and irregular and selfish desires.

*Prayer, the
peculiar dis-
tinction of
our nature;
it's great
advantages.*

How happy and dignified in this view of our near relation to, and intercourse with the almighty parent of all things, does the human species appear! "However low my rank in the order of rational beings; and although solately formed out of dust of the earth, I belong to the Father

of spirits, and infinite source of all goodness; and of all his works here below, I alone am capable of recognizing him, and his favours;" may each of you say. "He is ever with me. I am every moment upheld in life by him. Every thing within and around me, every thing that befalls me, shews and tells me, that this benevolent creator desires my true and most lasting happiness; and he has himself expressly declared it. And, for this end, he encourages, he commands me, often in the day to present to him the offering of a grateful heart for all his benefits, for my good, because I am thereby made better, and more worthy of them; and also to make known to him my wants and desires, that I may obtain all needful relief; but especially to apply to him for deliverance from all sinful defects, and to give me success in every worthy pursuit, that I may be approved by him in the end, and be fitted for an immortal existence."

"But if I give way to evil passions, to injurious actions towards my fellow creatures, or strive to draw them from the paths of truth and innocence; and do not on the contrary labour to make them good and happy, in proportion to the lights and means afforded to me, I lose my intended rank and station
in

in the heavenly world. Stained with such moral deformity and defilements, I cannot look up to a holy God with acceptance, but am necessarily cut off and excluded from his presence, 'till by deep compunction of spirit for past violations of his righteous laws, and watchful care against temptation for the time to come, I seek to regain his favourable regards and become wholly changed in the temper of my mind."

The time will not permit to point out various other important reflections arising from the foregoing account of prayer; but they will easily suggest themselves to your own private thoughts. I hasten to lay before you some things concerning forms of prayer for public worship, and that form in particular, which is used in this chapel.

*The grounds
of the public
worship of
God, and of
one day in
seven being
fixed for it.*

The duty of the public worship of Almighty God, has the same foundation with our private prayers and thanksgivings to him, being equally taught us by the light of nature, and by revelation. And the assembling of ourselves for this sacred employment, one day in seven, although perhaps not directly obligatory on any people, but the Israelites, and their descendants, does nevertheless come recommended to us by the

practice of the apostles, and first christians; and also by the deference which we owe to a divine institution; that as we acknowledge our Maker is to be publicly worshiped by us, we are persuaded and agreed, that we cannot make choice of a more suitable interval of time, on which to assemble for this end, than that of every returning seventh day, which was of his own appointment.

In former times, in our own country, there have been warm contests, concerning the use of free prayer, as it is called, in opposition to pre-composed forms, in christian assemblies.

The latter mode, which we prefer, without condemning persons of a different sentiment, seems to be growing into estimation with those who dissent from the established church; and some among them have adopted this our reformed liturgy; a circumstance, which may have a happy tendency in many respects.

*The defects
of forms of
public prayer;
and their
remedy.*

But there is one very capital objection, and inconvenience, belonging to set forms of Prayer, viz; that such as were drawn up in one age, through greater improvements made by the study of the sacred writings, and a consequent change of opinions

opinions in the worshipers, may become, in a course of years, wrong and improper to be used; and things of this nature once established, being too apt on that very account to be held sacred, and by no means to be changed, serious thinking persons are thereby often brought under great difficulties, unwilling to quit the christian society to which they have always belonged, and yet not able with a quiet mind and satisfied conscience, to continue to join in the use of prayers, and religious addressees, which they condemn.

The proper remedy would be, frequently to revise public devotional forms of human institution, and to correct, and bring them nearer to the scripture-model, according to the lights men enjoy.

Such a revival, and reformation of the Liturgy, was repeatedly called for, in our own country, in the last century, and also more recently, by persons who had unwillingly quitted the church established, and by many of its own members.

At the time of the Revolution, under King William, ecclesiastical commissioners were appointed for this purpose, and some progress was made, but it came to nothing: and perhaps

it is not much to be regretted, as they either did not see any cause for, or did not intend to make, any alterations in the great grievance of all, the object of religious worship.

The principal amendment in Clarke's reformed Liturgy, and the difference between our worship and that of the church of England.

This was seen, and felt by that most learned man and sincere christian, Dr. Clarke, Rector of St. James's in the city of Westminster, and prompted him to make amendments in the book of common prayer, in this one respect most particularly, by leaving out all the prayers and addresses to Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, (or Holy Spirit) and retaining those only which are directed to the one only true God, and Father of all. And it is probable, that if the life of that excellent person had been longer lent to the world, he would have himself published those amendments, and have made some attempt to procure their adoption, and admission into the public service of the church. But being taken off prematurely, in the vigour of his faculties and judgment, by a fever, this work of many years attention, fell into the hands of his son, Mr. Clarke, who gave it to the British Museum, where it is now repositied and preserved.

We

We who belong to this christian society, have adopted Dr. Clarke's (*a*) amendments of the Book of Common prayer, those especially which relate to the great point of the one sole object of religious worship; being persuaded that therein we follow the example, and precepts of Christ Jesus our Lord; who, himself constantly prayed to the Father, and directed his followers to pray to him, and to no other.

Some alterations, and improvements in other respects, additional to those of Dr. Clarke, have been made in the different editions of our Reformed Liturgy, which have met with your
C 4 approbation.

* In "Conversations on Christian Idolatry," p. 131, 132: a tract published the last year, which was put into your hands at the time, and which I should be glad to present to any one of you who may not have received it, you will perceive, that it is very probable that this our form of public worship was approved by King George II. certainly by his consort Queen Caroline; that Dr. Herring, Archbishop of Canterbury, gave it the fullest and highest commendations in a letter to the amiable and excellent Dr. Jortin, and that it also received very signal tokens of approbation from a learned and venerable prelate lately deceased, the intimate friend of Dr. Jortin.

And I cannot suffer myself to doubt, that whenever the people of Great Britain, shall calmly weigh the reasons offered in the abovementioned, and various other tracts, they will be earnest to obtain such an important alteration in their public form of prayer, so easily accomplished; a circumstance most fervently wished for by many of the clergy of the Church of England, a score of years ago, when I ceased to be one of them, and now much longed for by many of its lay members.

approbation, And another edition having been called for, and printed off, and now ready to be used, I have no doubt of the few alterations that have been judged necessary to be made, being equally approved by you.

There are however two things omitted, which you will note in this new edition; of which I beg to lay the particular reasons before you.

The first omission is that of the creed. Concerning which I would observe to you, that I had thought of leaving it out, when our worship first began in this place; but it was retained at the suggestion of judicious friends, lest without further examination or inquiry, we should, on that account, be represented, and believed to be a society of mere deists; and other christians be deterred from uniting with us.

But I persuade myself that it has been long seen that there are no grounds for such an imputation.

Some of the many reasons for not continuing this creed, as a part of our public worship, are the following;

1. It

1. It was not written by the apostles, although it goes under their name; and therefore is of no authority.

2. It is very wrong, and unwarrantable, to put persons upon making a declaration of their faith in assemblies for christian worship. It is a sufficient bond of union that they agree to join in the worship, upon conviction of the rightness of it.

3. No man, or number of men together, have any authority to make a creed for others, i. e. to dictate to them, what they are to believe in order to obtain the favour of God. Every one is to do this for himself, after due examination into what Almighty God has revealed.

4. The imposition of creeds in all ages, has been the cause of great mischief and dissension, and a constant snare to honest minds who are tied down to them, since all persons can never be expected intirely to agree in their opinions concerning doubtful points in religion; or, if they agree to day, may differ to morrow.

The other omission is, in the beginning of the Litany, where the three invocations are changed into one. I could name some eminent characters,

characters, members of this congregation; and others of high estimation for learning, judgment, and piety, in the established church, some of them my friends, favourers of Dr. Clarke's Liturgy, who have always esteemed it a great oversight and blemish therein, that when that celebrated person rejected the Trinity from the Litany, he should so far accommodate himself to the doctrine he exploded as to retain three different invocations in form, which carry to common heedless persons a sort of appearance of a Trinity.

Perfection in any thing that is of man, is not to be expected, nor will any form of worshipping the Divine Being, ever be compleat. But our improvements therein should keep pace with our increasing knowlege of God, and of the discoveries which he has made of himself. A neglect of this stops all progress, and makes errors everlasting.

It has been my peculiar felicity, to have united together, and to serve, a congregation, whose liberality of mind, and desire of improvement, has led them readily and freely to adopt such alterations of our form of worship, as it has appeared necessary to make, upon farther information, on scriptural grounds. And it is
one

one of the happy effects of a perfect freedom of judging and acting, which both people and ministers connected as we are assume, as equal disciples of Christ, our common Master; being the only likely way of bringing men to an union and agreement in all important truths.

Let all of us however, in the conclusion, remember and carry away with us, this one lesson, on this head: *viz*; not to think the better of ourselves, or the worse of others, merely on account of our different modes of worship. We only do our duty in honestly following our light, and the convictions of our own minds: They follow theirs. And he only will be approved at the last, 'whose life also is pure and reformed.

HYMN AFTER THE SERMON.

I.

High in the heavens, eternal God,
Thy goodness in full glory shines;
Thy truth shall break thro' every cloud,
Which veils and darkens thy designs.

II.

For ever firm thy justice stands,
As mountains their foundations keep;
Wise are the wonders of thy hands,
Thy judgments are a mighty deep.

Thy

III.

Thy providence is kind and large;
 Both man and beast thy bounty share;
 The whole creation is thy charge;
 The good are thy peculiar care.

IV.

O God, how excellent thy grace,
 Whence all our hope and comfort springs;
 The sons of Adam in distress,
 Fly to the shadow of thy wings.

PRAYER.

O GOD, who art over all blessed for ever; the happy and only potentate, king of kings, and lord of lords; who only hast immortality; dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no one hath seen, nor can see!

We desire now particularly to adore thy wisdom and power divine: that whilst we with difficulty can attend to one thing before us, Thou dost at once, and with one glance, survey and behold all things, and takest care of the interests and concerns of each of thy creatures, overlooking none, in this and in innumerable worlds: and especially knowest the thoughts, and hearest, and answerest the prayers of thy children of the human race, whom Thou hast invited thus to come unto Thee.

Help

Help us to raise our minds unto Thee : that although we cannot see Thee as Thou art, we may discern so much of Thee and thy perfect goodness, in thy holy word, and works around us, as may encourage us to present ourselves before Thee with humble confidence and joy.

And fill our hearts with the deepest sense of the honour, advantage, and happiness of being admitted, at all times, thus to converse with and address ourselves unto Thee, our God; that we may not do any thing to unqualify us for it: for that nothing impure, or sinful can approach Thee, with acceptance.

If by thy blessing, and the care of pious parents, thy gift unto us, never enough to be acknowledged, we have known Thee early, and tasted thy goodness, but by mixing too much with the world, and joining in its ways, have neglected and lost all due sense and desire of this devout intercourse with Thee; aid us speedily to redeem past advantages, lest our minds become hardened through the *deceitfulness of sin*.

And awaken and call all those to thyself, who through the criminal neglect of others in their tender age, and by their own indulgence
to

to evil passions, and contracted blindness, are ignorant of Thee, the light of life, and strangers to the blessed and purifying influences of an habitual application of the mind to Thee, in prayer, and praise; that they may not go out of the world without this desire and preference of Thee and thy laws, thus best cultivated, and on which their happiness for ever must depend.

Finally, O heavenly Father, from whom we all lately came, and to whom we are all soon to return, to be by Thee disposed of, as we shall have demeaned ourselves faithfully and uprightly in this our probationary state;

In the foretaste and earnest of that still better state hereafter, which Thou givest us to enjoy in these our approaches unto Thee here below; let us gladly leave wealth, and fame, and the grandeurs of this present fleeting scene to others; happy in thy favour, and in the prospect, and pursuit of that perfect felicity, which arises from virtue and thy approbation, and which will be the portion of thy faithful servants through endless ages, according to thine undeserved mercy and promise to us by Christ our Lord.